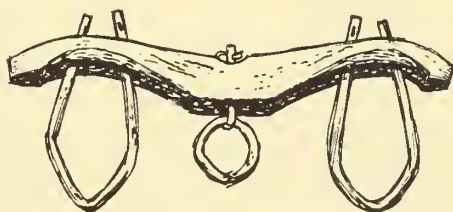


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description of the issues
and the historic struggle
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The Battle of the Giants:

Description of the Issues and the Historic Struggle
between
Lincoln and Douglas



By
Edward Sylvanus Williams,
Supervising Principal,
Hanover Township Public Schools,
Luzerne County, Pennsylvania.

Wilkes-Barre, Pa.
January 20, 1937.



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EDWARD SYLVANUS WILLIAMS
Supervising Principal, Hanover Township Public Schools

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Respectfully dedicated to

The Honorable Benjamin R. Jones, President Judge of the Common Pleas, Criminal, and Juvenile Courts, Luzerne County, Pennsylvania. Judge Jones has endeared himself to the people of Luzerne County, particularly to the teaching profession, as the distinguished advocate and supporter of constructive measures for the reclamation of our erring or misguided youth.

— 1938 —



INTRODUCTION

By

MISS VIRGINIA C. EVANS

Head of the English Department

MEMORIAL SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Hanover Township Public Schools

Luzerne County, Pennsylvania

In an era when matters of a controversial nature seem paramount, when on all sides we are beset with arguments and panaceas for all the ills and abuses of mankind, when industrial questions and difficulties are occupying the minds of all, it is, indeed, refreshing to read "The Battle of the Giants," a thesis explanatory of an issue of an earlier period in our history. The subject matter of this treatise—the moral principle of slavery as held by Abraham Lincoln and attacked by Stephen A. Douglas—has always been of unusual interest to Edward Sylvanus Williams, an ardent devotee of the Great Emancipator.

Born in Warrior Run, Pennsylvania, Edward Sylvanus Williams, the eldest son of Mr. and Mrs. William S. Williams, was reared in a family of worthy ancestry, of which he is justly proud. Through his mother he is connected with the Hugheses, pioneers and leaders of the Calvinistic Methodists of Wilkes-Barre, Plymouth, Sugar Notch, and Warrior Run. He is the grandson of the Reverend Edward J. Hughes, who for many years was an active and zealous clergyman.

On his father's side, Edward Sylvanus Williams is the nephew of William Sylvanus Williams, schoolmaster of the famous college preparatory school at Penllwyn, South Wales. At this well-known institution of learning many leading Welshmen prepared for Oxford University. Chief among these were Sir John Rhys, the Reverend Doctor T. Celkenyn Jones, and other leaders in business and in public life. Sir John Rhys became the leading antiquarian of the British Isles and the world's outstanding expert in deciphering ancient nomenclature. He ended his days as the distinguished President of Christ College, Oxford University. His niece, Miss Gladys Elizabeth Rhys, is at present a teacher in the public schools, Borough of Warrior Run, Pennsylvania.

The subject of this sketch, Edward Sylvanus Williams, received his early education in the public schools of Warrior Run Borough; his secondary training he secured at the Harry Hillman Academy of Wilkes-Barre. From this institution he was graduated with highest honors in the Class of 1898. During his senior year he earned the first prize in the Charles A. Miner Oratorical Contest for his splendid declamation of Webster's Address in the Trial of White. His interest in oratory has ever been one of his chief delights and his greatest source of pleasure.

As was to be expected on account of his paternal ancestry, Edward Sylvanus Williams selected the vocation of teaching. He entered this profession in 1899, and for thirty-four years he has been actively and successfully engaged in the training and guidance of the youth of Warrior Run Borough and of Hanover Township. His pleasing personality, optimistic nature, and kindly manner have endeared him to the boys and girls of these municipalities. At all times he is mindful of their problems, and his counsel is continually being sought and followed. Student guidance is ever his concern, and as an earnest teacher he strives to direct with zest and sympathy those who seek his aid.

Not only to students does Professor Williams extend his help, but to people of all walks of life. In fact, his friends, whose number is legion and among whom are many teachers, have all benefited by his untiring efforts to be of the greatest possible assistance and service to all who need his help.

For three years he was a student-at-law in the offices of Frank T. and Peter J. McCormick and has always been a keen observer of all types of litigation. Even during his adulthood Edward Sylvanus Williams has been eager for advancement in scholastic attainments. Wishing to continue his education, he also completed courses with the University of Pennsylvania, Susquehanna University, and Pennsylvania State College. From Susquehanna University he received three degrees: in February, 1928, the Bachelor of Arts degree; in June, 1928, the Bachelor of Oratory degree; in February, 1929, the Master of Science degree. A fourth degree, Master of Oratory, was conferred upon him by the Byron W. King School of Oratory, Pittsburgh.

Professor Williams spends his leisure time profitably by making analytical studies of important issues in our national history, and by formulating opinions and constructive criticisms and appraisements of our American heroes. Several of his treatises have been published: chief among these are: "The Disciple of Blackstone", "The Cradle of Genius", and "The Growth of Lincoln into National Power."

These are but a few of the many accomplishments of Edward Sylvanus Williams's life of fruitful service to his fellow man. He has been successful because of his determination to succeed despite all obstacles. The words of Daniel Webster are, indeed, appropriate here: "Illustrious as are his merits, yet far, O very far distant be the day when any inscription shall bear his name or any tongue pronounce his eulogy."

THE BATTLE OF THE GIANTS

The great strife between the leading parties for supremacy and power brought about a series of remarkable convulsions in our national politics. The discussion and clarification of the issues involved produced a wide divergence in public opinion and judgment. The long existence of the system of slavery had corrupted and debauched the popular sentiment of a large portion of our people. Its proponents had apparently benumbed the national conscience into a state of torpidity or callousness; but, when they sought to contravene the natural laws of our national growth and prosperity, they instigated sectional warfare and engendered partisan strife. Subsequent to 1848, all former lines of demarcation between the contending parties were almost entirely obliterated. There was scarcely a vote in the House or Senate where both sides divided strictly in accordance with their partisan nomenclature. The question of slavery exerted its secret and baneful influence upon every trial of strength in Congress, the Southern Whigs uniting with their Democratic opponents from the Southland and the New England Democrats joining their forces with the Northern Whigs, in bitter contention over some of the most cherished plans of the slave system. To both, the real and pretended fear that the institution of slavery was endangered by the swiftly moving course of events may be assigned this radical sectional division. Recognizing that the system of slavery was a reactionary obstacle in the path of human progress that it was an ever-present impediment to our political, material, and religious development, its warmest supporters, ever mindful of that palpable fact, now realized that its position before the world was being seriously impaired by that campaign of elucidation inaugurated by the opponents of the system. They therefore prepared to prevent the destruction of the monetary value of four millions of human beings held in bondage, whose aggregate value, according to the standard of chattel values existing before the Civil War, was computed to be four hundred million dollars.

The balance of legislative power,—the numerical equality of representatives of free and slave states in the upper branch of Congress—had preserved, it is true, the peace of the country for more than a generation. As for back as 1787, when the constitutional convention was in session at Philadelphia, the question of slavery was the fruitful cause of wide-spread discord and sectional divisions. It had already injected its disintegrating virus into our body politic and drawn its line of sectional hatred between the North and South. It was, at that time, the sole cause of those compromises of the Constitution, intended to preserve the balance of legislative power between the two sections; namely—the provision in Clause 3, Section 2, Article 1, for the enumeration of five slaves to three whites in determining the basis for Congressional representation; the recognition in Clause 1, Section 9, Article 1, of the right of Congress to prohibit the slave-trade, but postponing its enforcement until the year 1808; and the enactment of the fugitive slave provision in Clause 3, Section 2, Article 4, which required that any person held to service or labor in one State, under the laws thereof, escaping into another State, shall not, in consequence of any law or regulation therein, be discharged

from such service or labor, but shall be delivered up on the claim of the party to whom such service or labor may be due. The Constitution with those provisions was finally adopted on September 17, 1787, and, upon the ratification of two-thirds of the States in 1788, went into actual operation as the supreme law of the land on the 30th day of April 1789. Of the thirteen States then in the Federal Union, we find the following alignment upon the subject of slavery; slave,—Delaware, Georgia, Maryland, South Carolina, Virginia, and North Carolina; free,—Pennsylvania, New Jersey, Connecticut, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Rhode Island. By the constitutional apportionment, the North was given fourteen senators and thirty-five representatives; the South, twelve senators and thirty representatives. But before the close of Washington's administration, there were admitted, in pursuance of the policy of preserving the balance of legislative power in the upper branch of Congress, three additional States: Vermont in 1791, free; Kentucky in 1792, slave; and Tennessee in 1796, slave. Thus at the close of Washington's historic administration, the balance of power was adroitly maintained, each section having sixteen senators as a legislative check upon the encroachments of the other.

The South was not slow to perceive the political advantage which would accrue from an industrious use of the twenty years allotted by the Constitution to the supporters of the African slave-trade. The slave-traders might be wholly deficient in moral susceptibilities, but they certainly could not be convicted of mental density or political decrepitude. Incursions into Africa multiplied; the most ruthless methods for the increase of the African traffic were adopted and thorough preparations were made to take the fullest advantage of the time limitations. As a natural result, the importation of negroes along the Southern sea-board between 1789 and 1808 easily gave to the South a numerical superiority in representation in the lower branch of Congress. Nevertheless, that temporary advantage would have been overcome in the North by its greater wealth, expansive power, and commercial enterprise, if the inventive genius of Eli Whitney had not awakened the South to the necessity of forming new slave States south of the Ohio to offset the future legislative advantage which the Ordinance of 1787 had given to the expanding Northwest.

The maintenance of the balance of legislative power, though not announced as a party doctrine, was steadily followed as a policy by the proponents of slavery in the South, and was often supported, without open objection, by its opponents in the North. Any abeyance of the agitation upon the slave question was due principally to the acceptance and continuance of that policy of equally divided legislative power. The temporary Northern advantage in the upper house of Congress, secured by the admission of Ohio in 1803, was soon counterbalanced by the admission of Louisiana on April 30, 1812. Thereafter, there followed in pursuance of that very same policy, the admission of the following states: Indiana in 1816, free; Mississippi in 1817, slave; Illinois in 1818, free; Alabama in 1819, slave; Maine in 1820, free; Missouri in 1821, slave; Arkansas in 1836, slave; Michigan in 1837, free; Florida in 1845, slave; Texas in 1845, slave; Iowa in 1846, free; and Wisconsin in 1848, free. Each side had, at the close of

Polk's administration, thirty representatives in the upper branch of Congress; but the South, because of that timely provision in Clause 2, Section 2, Article 1, maintained her numerical superiority in the lower branch. In 1850, this Southern advantage was overcome by the enactment of Henry Clay's Omnibus Bill, under which California was admitted as a free State, thereby giving the North, on September 9, 1840, thirty-two senators; and leaving the South in the minority with thirty. After the admission of Florida in 1845, the proponents of slavery saw clearly that the available slave territory was exhausted; but that there still remained an immense, untouched domain, now consecrated to freedom by the Missouri Compromise. They could not help but deplore that fatal day on which the Missouri Compromise was enacted, which had established a legal barrier which prevented their exploitation of the Louisiana Purchase northward. They now realized, with poignant sorrow, that the region offered an imperial area from which the North could organize free states and thereby secure eventually a preponderance of political power. It was the disquietude over that alarming prospect which was chiefly instrumental in causing the urgent demand for the admission of Texas on December 29, 1845, and furnished a pretext for the war with Mexico. After all, it was not the strip of territory between the Nueces and the Rio Grande that was the underlying cause of the Mexican conflict. It was the consuming desire for additional territory, for the widening of the domain, and the confirming of the despotism of slavery. It was in anticipation of the acquisition of additional territory in the South and West, where the institution could find easy expansion under Southern influence and tutelage, that President Polk secured from Congress an appropriation of two million dollars to be used in the peace negotiations with Mexico. That was also the propelling motive for the defeat of the Wilmot Proviso, the acceptance of which would have disturbed the carefully prepared plans and over-thrown the underlying purpose for which the war against a sister republic was inaugurated. These historic facts, relating to the south-western expansion of our country, may grate somewhat harshly upon the sensibilities of the average American patriot; but their confirmation, if desired, may be secured by the unbiased reading of the evidence of history.

This sectional controversy over the institution of slavery reached its greatest activity and decisive culmination in the single decade between 1850 and 1860. The ratification of the Constitution of the United States with its pro-slavery safe-guards, the passage of the Missouri Compromise in 1820, and the enactment of any other legislation relating to the expansion or restriction of slavery were accomplished at first without general disquietude or open resentment. The controversy over the extension of slavery now became deep, widespread, and bitter. Rising steadily since 1787, the controversy over the institution grew in volume, depth, and intensity. The strong popular desire for tranquillity, concord, and union exerted its influence upon Congress to secure the passage of the Omnibus Bill of 1850, in the hope that at length a final solution of the vexatious question had been secured; but unhappily the eradication of the prolific source of all the hatred, strife, contention, and bloodshed still remained. There were moving to the foreground forces which were beyond human

power to control. Slowly, step by step, with unerring precision and definite purpose, those irreconcilable elements of our body politic were approaching the predestined line of battle, and no effort of human brain could turn them from their course. In vain did Webster thunder his expositions on the written law to quiet the fears of the slaveholders and hurl his mighty shafts of hatred and scorn against the disturbing persistency of the abolitionists. In vain did Henry Clay, by his powerful eloquence and irresistible personality, compromise those well-nigh insurmountable differences which separated the contending forces and seek to remove the barriers of future contention between them. If Calhoun and Wendell Phillips, Douglas and Charles Sumner, Wigfall and William Lloyd Garrison, Seward and Jefferson Davis, Governor Wise and John Brown of Osawatomie, and all those other historic figures who occupied the forefront of the political stage for the quarter of a century, had never appeared upon the scene, the final struggle between those discordant forces might have been delayed, or it might have hastened, but it could not, from the very nature of the conflict have been averted. It was the contest of human slavery against human freedom, "the conflict between opposing and enduring forces," which involved an issue as inevitable as it was irrepressible. Compromisers might come and go, diplomatists might exert their genius and skill to compose sectional controversies, and orators might deliver their choicest efforts in behalf of a rational, all-embracing patriotism; but all to no avail, except to alleviate the symptoms of a national disease that was organic.

Broadly considered, the political struggle of 1848 was nothing more or less than a part of that persistent struggle of the centuries between organized despotism and individual freedom, between arbitrary wrong sanctioned by dogma and law, and private rights consecrated by justice and experience. The situation was representative of two strong vigilant, and organized forces, each increasing in strength and power with the progress of time, but each approaching the other in deadly and irrepressible conflict. One was governed by the liberal, philanthropic spirit of the North; the other, by the selfish mercenary spirit of the South. In both of these contending forces, there were, as in all social movements, many extremists: on the one hand, those who were willing to destroy the Union for the sake of liberty; on the other, those who were willing to destroy the Union at the behest of slavery. But in each of these great controversial forces, we find a predominating influence or sentiment: in the former, the prevailing sentiment of those who, wishing to rescue the oppressed and to destroy the distinctions of caste and color, desired to go forward and civilize mankind; in the latter, the complacent sentiment of those, who, lured by the lustre of wealth and the pride of blood, were content with society at it was. In the former, therefore, we find the element of discontent,—the herald of progress; in the latter, the element of contentment,—the forerunner of decay.

It requires no great power of discernment to see that one of those great contending forces was representative of the elevating discipline of constitutional liberty; the other, of the debasing influence of human bondage. One believed in the extension of liberty; the other, in the restriction of it. One accepted freedom as universal and beyond

localization; the other regarded it as bounded by geographical lines and subject to national enactments. One represented the generation that made the Constitution, and, of course, sustained the predominance of freedom as bequeathed by the ordinance of Jefferson; the other disregarded the plain guarantees of the organic law, and accepted the theory of nullification as taught by the doctrine of Calhoun. One, ever mindful of the significance of past historic experiences and of its relation to posterity, professed a consciousness that the system of human bondage was wrong and at variance with true American tradition; the other, unheeding the past and closing its eyes to the wants of the future, adopted the casuistry that slavery is right and necessary to Southern development. One, supported in its contention by the declarations and practice of Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Patrick Henry, and their compatriots, was free to accept the natural development of truth and to seek an honest solution of all difficulties encountered in our social structure; the other, fired by the false sentiments of Davis, Benjamin, Campbell, Breckenridge, and their compeers, turned its face from the light of reason and sought the establishment of the hateful oligarchy of the skin. Nevertheless, the one, in order to promote national peace and harmony, was willing that each state should retain the right of manumitting all slaves by an ordinary act of legislation; the other, foreseeing the inevitable consequence of an enlightening public sentiment, was swift to impose legal and constitutional obstructions. In short, the former, plain and direct, represented the welfare of mankind in general; the latter, complex and sophistical, represented the interest of the landed gentry in particular.

The prolonged struggle in the United States Congress over the compromise measures of 1850 had finally culminated in a settlement which the leaders of both parties proclaimed a wise and patriotic adjustment. The opponents of slavery had made distinct gains by the admission of California with a free state constitution and the abolition of the slave-trade in the District of Columbia. They had secured considerable advantage by the passage of a more stringent fugitive-slave law, and the organization of the territories of Utah and New Mexico. The South had professed its keen disappointment over the public abandonment of the property doctrine in the interest of an amicable adjustment; the North, over the acceptance of that drastic provision in the fugitive-slave law which invested customs officers and seventeen hundred postmasters with judicial and summary power to secure its enforcement throughout the country. The passage of those measures had therefore aroused certain factional differences within the ranks of both parties, had provoked violent outbursts of sectional displeasure, and had provoked Northern sentiment to an alarming extent. All those manifestations of popular displeasure and discontent had, however, been swept aside by the overwhelming desire of the nation for peace and unity. Dissatisfaction in the North had been silenced by the argument that at last a final settlement had been secured for the vexatious question. The apprehensions of many well-meaning, patriotic residents had been allayed by the splendid prospect of having definite harmony between the contending forces,—between slavery, struggling to break the bonds of its legal restraint, and

free labor, exerting its expansive powers for national development. Many had been actually deluded into the belief that two such antagonistic elements could now dwell together in peace and harmony; that compromises, intended to settle their differences, were not altogether vain and transitory; and that this nation in order to insure ultimate harmony, would not be required to accept either the one or the other as the supreme dominating factor of its political and industrial life.

On the other hand, we may rest assured that there was prevalent in the South a distinct note of discord. Its leading statesmen, who had always regarded the Ordinance of 1787 as the first great political error committed in this country, were now thoroughly convinced that the Missouri Compromise was equally erroneous and fatal. They began to point out that the most prominent and salutary feature of the Compromise of 1850 was non-interference in the territories of Utah and New Mexico, but that this feature of the adjustment was not available to Southern advantage. By Mexican law, slavery was prohibited within the territories of Utah and New Mexico and by the Missouri Compromise, from the northern portion of New Mexico and from the entire territory of Utah. Therefore, the Missouri restriction, if not expressly repealed, would continue to operate in most of the territory, thereby invalidating any advantage which might be secured by the Southern slave-holder. The fancied security of the North, and the professed pleasure of the South, over the compromise measures of 1850 were, after all, only brief, vain and ephemeral. Plainly, then, compromises and concessions were simply mere palliatives, and not effective remedies. Compromises do not compose; concessions do not satisfy. The disease was not local, but widespread; not slight, but constitutional; not superficial, but organic.

In order to satisfy Southern rapacity, which was as insatiable as it was cruel and despotic, three distinguished members of the United States Senate began to plan a political movement that was as startling as it was dark and portentous. The inordinate ambition of the one and the bold insouciance of the others, had combined to make this remarkable political intrigue the most daring and astounding in the annals of American politics. These instigators of fresh political turmoil and alarm were Senator Stephen Arnold Douglas, Chairman of the Senate Committee on Territories; the Honorable Archibald Dixon, Whig Senator from Kentucky; and Senator David R. Atchison, representative from Missouri. In a speech, referring to the Compromise of 1850, Senator Stephen A. Douglas on a former occasion declared:

"In taking leave of this subject, I wish to state that I have determined never to make another speech upon the slavery question; and I will now add the hope that the necessity for it will never exist. So long as our opponents do not agitate for repeal or modification, why should we agitate for any purpose? We claim that the Compromise is a final settlement."

Likewise, Senator Dixon maintained that he had been, and was, a firm and zealous friend of the compromise measures of 1850, that wise and patriotic adjustment which secured the organization of the territories of Utah and New Mexico.

In addressing the Senate upon Senator Douglas's first Nebraska Bill, Senator Atchison, the third of the conspiring triumvirate, declared:

"I have always been of the opinion that the first great error committed in the political history of this country was the Ordinance of 1787, rendering the Northwest territory free territory. The next great error was the Missouri Compromise. But they are both irremediable. There is no remedy for them. We must submit to them. I am prepared to do so. It is evident that the Missouri Compromise cannot be repealed."

Notwithstanding those declarations, the minions of slavery were now perfectly satisfied that it was their duty, as fair-minded rational statesman, to co-operate with one another in securing the repeal of the slave-restriction in the Missouri Compromise. After considerable deliberation, it was agreed that Senator Douglas should introduce a new bill for the organization of the territories of Kansas and Nebraska, containing therein a provision to meet the necessity of the South. The clause invalidating the Missouri restriction was finally attached to his Kansas-Nebraska Bill, declaring that the restriction, "which being inconsistent with the principles of non-intervention by Congress with slavery in the States and Territories, as recognized by the legislation of 1850 (commonly called the Compromise measures) is hereby declared to be inoperative and void. It is now the true intent and meaning of this act not to legislate slavery into any territory, nor to exclude it therefrom, but to leave the people thereof perfectly free to form and regulate their domestic institutions in their own way, subject only to the Constitution of the United States." ¹

Inasmuch as the South was thoroughly organized and almost unanimous in the support of the repeal of the restriction, the movement soon embraced the leading elements of the Democratic party in Congress, a majority of the Whig leaders from the South, and the unremitting support of the Pierce Administration. The conspirators also had the active, sympathetic support of President Franklin Pierce, who in his first message to Congress on December 5, 1853, thus spoke of the general feeling of repose and security that had been produced by the passage of the Missouri Compromise of 1850:

"That this repose is to suffer no shock during my official term if I have the power to prevent it, those who placed me here may be assured."

The Kansas-Nebraska Bill, with its repealing clause, was finally passed. The splendid work of a generation, fairly secured by mutual compromise and generous concession was completely undone. Manifestly, the expediency of compromise and concession, was utterly vain and illogical; the spirit of slavery, singularly true to its real nature and consistent with its character.

In speaking of the repeal of the Missouri Compromise as a gross breach of faith, Abraham Lincoln in his strongest argumentative address at Peoria, Illinois, on October 16, 1854, gave this striking characterization:

"Slavery is founded in the selfishness of man's nature—opposition to it in the love of justice. These principles are an eternal antagonism and when brought into collision so fiercely as slavery extension brings them, shocks and throes and convulsions must ceaselessly follow. Repeal

¹ "I passed the Kansas-Nebraska Act myself. I had the authority and power of a dictator, throughout the whole controversy in both houses."
Douglas to Cutts. p. 122.

the Missouri Compromise, repeal all compromises, repeal the Declaration of Independence, repeal all past history, you still cannot repeal human nature. It still will be the abundance of man's heart that slavery extension is wrong, and out of the abundance of his heart his mouth will continue to speak."

It is needful to an intelligent understanding of the development of Abraham Lincoln into mental and oratorical power, of Lincoln's relations to his country in that trying period, and of Lincoln's creed touching the organic character of the government, that the critical student of that splendid career should read and study closely these strong, elaborate, and progressive speeches: one delivered before the Young Men's Lyceum in Springfield, Illinois, on the 27th day of January, 1838; one before the House of Representatives on the 12th day of January, 1848; one in the Lincoln-Douglas debate at Peoria, Illinois, on the 16th of December, 1854; one at the Republican State Convention at Springfield, Illinois, on the 16th day of June, 1858; one at Columbus, Ohio, in the gubernatorial campaign, on the 16th of September, 1859; and one at Cooper Institute, New York, on the 27th day of February, 1860. Some of those addresses stand forth as masterpieces of political disquisition.

For our purpose, the great debates between Lincoln and Douglas will suffice. In general, they constitute the most extraordinary intellectual encounter in the annals of American politics. Those debates, far from being a mere incident in American politics, "marked an era. Their influences and effect were co-extensive with the Republic." ¹

The distinguished antagonist of Abraham Lincoln was born at Brandon, Vermont, but had ultimately settled in Winchester, Illinois, where he taught school and studied law. In 1834, Stephen A. Douglas was admitted to the bar of the Supreme Court; and, during the same year, came into contact, for the first time, with his life-long political adversary, Abraham Lincoln. Lincoln was then attending the meeting of the legislature at Vandalia, Illinois, while Douglas, though not a member, was busily engaged in lobbying for his own appointment as State's Attorney, an office then held by Colonel John J. Hardin. This first meeting of those notable champions had not given either of them any presentiment of the future greatness of the other, nor had it created even a favorable impression of the other's talents and abilities. Stephen A. Douglas was anything but favorably impressed by the rough, ungainly appearance of the raw recruit from the Sangamon; and Abraham Lincoln's opinion of Douglas may be expressed in his own unfavorable dictum that he was "the least man he had ever met." ²

The desirable office of State's Attorney was held long enough by Douglas to secure his election to the legislature in 1836. His legislative activity was centered chiefly upon the proposed removal of the capital to Jacksonville, where he then resided; but that local ambition was readily submerged for the desirable appointment of Register of the Land Office at Springfield. Douglas made that remunerative office the principal means of securing his nomination for Congress in 1837.

¹ James G. Blaine in his "Twenty Years of Congress".

² Ward Lamon, p. 185; John T. Morse, I. p. 43; Nicolay and Hay, I. p. 124.

The electorate, which was not always in full accord with his ambitious plans, defeated Douglas for Congress at the general election. In 1840, while twenty-six years of age, Douglas was appointed to the important office of Secretary of State. In 1841, he became engaged in the daring political scheme, ostensibly for the reformation of the judiciary, but in reality for the promotion of his political prestige and fortune. Having secured a pliant legislature, Douglas secured the passage of a bill which unceremoniously turned out of office the five circuit judges and secured for appointment to the Supreme Court five partisan judges, who were obligated by the Act to perform, in addition to their regular duties, the work of the circuit courts. Of course, it is scarcely necessary to state that one of those appointees was the crafty Stephen Arnold Douglas himself. In 1843, Douglas resigned his position on the Bench to enter the lower House of Representatives where he remained for two successive terms. In 1847, Douglas was elected a member of the United States Senate and was twice re-elected. Thus, at the age of thirty-nine, Douglas was successively State's Attorney, Register of the Land Office, Representative in the Illinois Legislature, Secretary of State for Illinois, Congressman, and United States Senator, a series of political successes which may be attributed, not so much to accident as to certain qualities of active and skilful leadership which made such successes possible.

In 1850, there was drawing to a close the first Senatorial term of Stephen Arnold Douglas, fittingly called, "the Rupert of debate, and the stormy petrel of our most turbulent politics." He desired reelection and the endorsement of his official conduct by the people of Illinois. Perceiving that the Lecompton Constitution had been lawlessly framed by a mere handful of the residents of Kansas, and that slavery thus forced upon the people of Kansas had made hosts of converts for the Republican Party, Douglas began to differ with President Buchanan, either because his sense of right and justice would not sanction so base an injustice, or because he desired to place himself in accord with the prevailing sentiment in Illinois favorable to the Topeka Constitution. Douglas protested vigorously against the fraudulent Lecompton Constitution as a "travesty and mockery" of the very doctrine of popular sovereignty which had been incorporated into the Democratic platform of 1856. At any rate, we know that Douglas voted steadily against the admission under the Lecompton Constitution, aligning himself with the Republicans against the Buchanan Administration. For this irregularity, regarded by the adherents of the Buchanan Administration as "Douglas's apostasy", Douglas incurred not only the displeasure of the administration, but also aroused the pronounced suspicion of the South. President Buchanan threatened Douglas personally: "Mr. Douglas, I wish you to remember that no Democrat ever yet differed from an administration of his own choice without being crushed." Douglas retorted: "Mr. President, I wish you to remember that General Jackson is dead." The seeming courage and manliness as well as the dignity and brilliance which Senator Douglas displayed in his heroic fight for "the great principle", and especially against the heavy hand of the Buchanan Administration, captivated the heads and hearts of the young men of his State, and even won for him the praise of life-long enemies throughout the nation.

It was really inconsistent for Douglas to labor against that which his Kansas-Nebraska Bill had made possible. But this he did with so fine a display of artfulness and skill that not a few Republicans prominent among whom were Burlingame, Colfax, Crittenden, Bowies, Greeley, and Wilson, now considered Senator Stephen A. Douglas a sincere and unselfish advocate of the Topeka Constitution. Attracted by the manifest boldness and nobility of the opposition of Douglas, Greeley, the all-important Horace Greeley, began an agitation in favor of Douglas for the United States Senatorship in 1858, "Douglas is a brave man," declared Greeley. "Forgive the past, and sustain the righteous."¹ Dazzled by the hope of gaining an ally of superior position experience, and ability, those leaders of the new party, under the leadership of Greeley, counselled the Illinois Republicans to unite with the Douglas Democrats in returning Stephen A. Douglas to the Senate. Lincoln was seriously disturbed by the attitude of Greeley, the distinguished editor of the New York "Tribune". To his law partner W. H. Herndon, he declared: "I think Greeley is not doing me right. His conduct, I believe, savors a little of injustice. I am a true Republican and have been tried already in the hottest part of the anti-slavery fight, and yet I find them taking up Douglas, a veritable dodger,—once a tool of the South, now its enemy,—and pushing him to the front. He forgets that when he does that he pulls me down at the same time. I fear Greeley's attitude will damage me with Sumner, Seward, Wilson, Phillips, and other friends in the East."² Notwithstanding this defection, the Illinois Republicans, encouraged and supported by such men as Seward, Sumner, Garrison, Beecher, and Theodore Parker, refused to accept Douglas. Evidently, they had remembered his speech in which he solemnly reaffirmed the great Missouri Compromise itself. He then said: "It has its origin in the hearts of all patriotic men, who desired to preserve and perpetuate the blessings of our glorious Union—an origin akin to that of the Constitution of the United States, conceived in the same feeling of fraternal affection, and calculated to remove forever the danger which seemed to threaten, at some future day, to sever the social bond of Union. All the evidences of public opinion, at that day, seemed to indicate that this Compromise had been canonized in the hearts of the American people, as a sacred thing which no ruthless hand would ever be reckless enough to disturb."³ They had not forgotten that the speaker himself, of all men in the world, had with ruthless hand, committed the terrible sacrilege! They had not forgotten that Senator Douglas, beneath the lash of the slaveholder's whip, had introduced the Kansas-Nebraska Bill, an act in which he assumed to set aside the venerable safe-guard of freedom in the territory west and north of Missouri under the barbarous privilege of "popular sovereignty", declaring in that fateful amendment that the slavery restriction of the Missouri Compromise was "inoperative and void." They could not reconcile themselves to that flagrant abuse of power and gross breach of national faith. At the State Convention in Springfield, Ill., held on the 16th day of June, 1858, the Illinois Republicans formerly declared amidst great enthusiasm and without a dissenting voice that Abraham Lincoln

1 Herndon and Weik, II. Chap. 3, p. 64. Edition of 1930.

2 Herndon, p. 60. Edition of 1930.

3 Published in the "State Register" on November 8, 1849.

was their first and only choice for the United States Senate to fill the vacancy at the expiration of the term of Stephen A. Douglas, the Democratic incumbent.

It is almost needless to state that Abraham Lincoln realized the full import of that titanic struggle. He in no wise underrated its severity; for he knew, from previous experiences, his opponent's strong points—his dash, his fearlessness, his adroitness, his ardent temperament, the blind devotion of his followers, and his superior political fame. The dogged persistence with which Lincoln had pursued the redoubtable Douglas had given him a clear conception of the wide difference between their political attitudes. On one occasion, Lincoln declared: "Twenty-two years ago, Judge Douglas and I first became acquainted. We were both young men then—he a trifle younger than I. Even then we were both ambitious—I perhaps, quite as much as he. With me, the race of ambition has been failure—a flat failure; with him, it has been a splendid success. His name fills the nation, and is not unknown even in foreign lands. I affect no contempt for the high eminence he has reached. So reached that the oppressed of my species might have shared with me in the elevation, I would rather stand on that eminence than wear the richest crown that ever pressed a monarch's brow." ¹ At another time, but in an entirely different vein, Lincoln draws a forcible contrast between Douglas and himself, detailing, in the most effective manner, certain distinct advantages which his opponent had acquired: "Senator Douglas is of world-wide renown. All the anxious politicians of his party, or who have been of his party for years past, have been looking upon him as certainly, at no distant day, to be President of the United States. They have seen in his round jolly, fruitful face, post-offices, land-offices, marshalships, and cabinet appointments, chargeships, and foreign missions bursting and sprouting out in wonderful exuberance, ready to be laid hold of by their greedy hands. And as they have been gazing upon this attractive picture so long, they cannot, in the little distraction that has taken place in the party, bring themselves to give up the charming hope; but with greedier anxiety they rush about him, sustain him, and give him marches, triumphal entries, and receptions beyond what even in the days of his highest prosperity they could not have brought about in his favor. On the contrary, nobody has ever suspected me to be President. In my poor, lean, lank face, nobody has ever seen that any cabbages were sprouting out. These are advantages all, taken together, that the Republicans labor under. We have to fight this battle upon principle, and upon principle alone." ² On another occasion, Lincoln gives vent to his appreciation of one of the most dangerous qualities of Douglas, a complaint which strongly resembles the historic complaint which Plutarch put into the mouth of Thucydides. Referring to Pericles, Thucydides declared: "When I have thrown him and given him a fair fall, by persisting that he had no fall, he gets the better of me, and makes the bystanders, in spite of their own eyes, believe him." Thus said Lincoln about Douglas:

¹ See Holland pp. 155-6; Arnold, p. 144; Lamon, pp. 408-9; and Browne, pp. 283-4.

² Debates, p. 55; Browne, p. 291: An extract from the opening paragraph of his speech at Springfield, Ill., July 17, 1858.

"It is impossible to get the advantage of him. Even if he is worsted, he so bears himself that the people are bewildered and uncertain as to who has the better of it." ¹

Inasmuch as there was no bravado in the assumption of the task which his party friends had assigned, so there was no misgiving as to its ultimate result. With careful deliberation, Lincoln composed his speech for the convention which nominated him, putting into his address of acceptance the principles about which he proposed to speak to the people in the approaching contest. In argument, sententious and axiomatic, Lincoln fully demonstrated, with that unerring logical precision which he generally revealed, the silent subversion of the cherished principles of liberty and the commitment of the government to the dogma of domestic servitude. The submission of the manuscript to his law partner, William H. Herndon, aroused that gentleman's worst fears. ² Herndon was dismayed particularly at the first paragraph. It contained that political prophecy which is heralded as one of the world's great historical events. We will recall the declaration:

" 'A house divided against itself cannot stand.' I believe this Government cannot endure permanently half slave and half free. I do not expect the Union to be dissolved, I do not expect the house to fall but I do expect it will cease to be divided. It will become all one thing, or all the other. Either the opponents of slavery will arrest the further spread of it and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in the course of ultimate extinction; or its advocates will push it forward till it shall become alike lawful in all the States, old as well as new, North as well as South."

Herndon doubted the discretion of making such an assertion at that time. Lincoln, however, declared: "The proposition has been true six thousand years. I will deliver this speech as it is written." Thus spoke the man with a message; thus spoke the precursor and herald of a destiny.

Notwithstanding the air of confidence which Douglas carried everywhere before his admiring constituents, and his general attitude of patronizing condescension towards his less successful adversary, the jaunty Senator from Illinois entertained an entirely different view concerning the many strong qualities of his antagonist. He clearly felt a great deal of disquietude, if not trepidation, over the prospect of meeting Lincoln in a public discussion. His own followers in their unbounded enthusiasm might indulge in every manner of noisy demonstration, might even boast that Douglas would now "use up and utterly demolish" the young Chief of the Sangamon, and might look forward to a certain degree of delight to the prospect of seeing "the Little Giant chewing up Old Abe"; but Douglas looked forward to the contest with anxious concern and foreboding. The receipt of the telegram at Washington announcing Lincoln's nomination for the Senatorship brought from Douglas this announcement to a group of Republican representatives: "Well, gentlemen, you have nominated

1 Comparison is made by W. M. Dickson, in Harper's Magazine, ixix p. 64.

2 Herndon afterwards declared: "Lincoln, deliver that speech as read and it will make you President."—Herndon, Vol. 2, Chap. 3, p. 69. Edition of 1930.

a very able and a very honest man.”¹ Privately, Douglas expressed a less dignified, but more emphatic opinion: “Of all the damned Whig rascals about Springfield, Abe Lincoln is the ablest and the most honest.”² To John W. Forney, Douglas made this pointed observation: “I shall have my hands full. He is the strong man of his party—full of wit, facts, dates—and the best stump-speaker, with his droll ways and dry jokes, in the West. He is as honest as he is shrewd; and if I beat him, my victory will be hardly won.”³ It is not surprising that Douglas was reluctant to engage Lincoln in public debate; for he had, from previous contests, gained an accurate conception of Lincoln’s real ability in a forensic contest. When the challenge for a joint debate was received, Douglas thus expressed himself to his intimate political friends: “I do not feel, between you and me, that I want to go into this debate. The whole country knows me and has me measured. Lincoln, as regards myself, is comparatively unknown, and if he gets the best of this debate, and I want to say that he is the ablest man the Republicans have got, I shall lose everything and Lincoln will gain everything. Should I win, I shall gain but little. I do not want to get into a debate with Abe.”⁴ After the agreement to the proposed meetings, from which there was absolutely no possible escape, Douglas declared to some of his friends who tried to belittle the task which lay before him: “Gentlemen, you do not know Mr. Lincoln. I have known him long and well, and I know that I shall have anything but an easy task. I assure you that I would rather meet any other man in the country, in this joint-debate, than Abraham Lincoln.”⁵

Before the opening of the great debate between Lincoln and Douglas, the Supreme Court of the United States, Chief Justice Taney delivering the opinion, decided that slavery is property, entitled to no less protection than any other property, and upheld as such by the National Constitution in every territory against any act of the legislature or of Congress inimical to its welfare. In the same connection, President Buchanan tersely promulgated the saying: “Kansas is as much a slave state as South Carolina or Georgia; slavery, by virtue of the Constitution, exists in every territory.” Moreover, the very elaborate opinion which Chief Justice Taney announced what was unknown to civil, canon, feudal, common, or constitutional law, namely, that there are “slave races”. In consequence thereof, any negro living under the care and protection of our benign institutions, could expect nothing more than domestic servitude for himself and his posterity. With admirable consistency, Dred Scott had sued for his freedom and that of his wife and children, claiming that his being carried by his owner into the territory north of the southern boundary of Missouri, wherein slavery had been excluded by the Missouri Compromise, he had become freed by the operation of the law.⁶ This de-

1 Alley’s Reminiscences, in Rice, p. 575.

2 W. M. Dickson in “Harper’s Magazine,” LXIX. p. 64.

3 Forney, II, p. 179.

4 Henry Whitney, pp. 456-7.

5 Browne, “Everyday Life of Abraham Lincoln,” p. 282.

6 It is the law of Great Britain.

cision of the Supreme Court, stripping the slave of all legal rights, made the institution of slavery, not municipal, but national in character; individual liberty, not a primal, constitutional guarantee, but a secondary, provincial award. Douglas, you must remember, approved the Dred Scott decision, although an Anti-Lecompton Democrat, and the dogma of that decision effectually destroyed his own doctrine of Popular Sovereignty. The acuteness of Stephen A. Douglas as a politician had brought him to the full realization of his ugly dilemma. Such, however, was his political boldness that Douglas at once adopted the desperate but hopeless expedient of reconciling his favorite theory with the Dred Scott decision and of shielding himself from the threatened reaction of his own temporizing statesmanship. In a speech at Springfield, Ill., June 12th, 1857, Douglas endorsed the opinion of Chief Justice Taney and his associates in the following language:

"Their judicial decisions will stand in all future time, a proud monument to their greatness, the admiration of the good and the wise, and a rebuke to the partisans of faction and lawless violence. If unfortunately any considerable portion of the people of the United States shall so far forget their obligations to society as to allow the partisan leaders to array them in violent resistance to the final decision of the highest judicial tribunal on earth, it will become the duty of all friends of order and constitutional government, without reference to past political differences, to organize themselves and marshal their forces under the glorious banner of the Union, in vindication of the Constitution and the supremacy of the laws over the advocates of faction and the champions of violence."

In spite of the Douglas cry of "anarchy", "sacrilege", and "revolution", Lincoln met him fairly and pointedly in a speech at Springfield in June, 1857. Douglas might calm his wavering constituents with the declaration: "What, oppose the Supreme Court! Is it not sacred? To resist it is anarchy". Yet to Lincoln, the manifest weakness and inconsistency of that decision were not beyond the pale of just criticism. Lincoln declared:

"We believe as much as Judge Douglas (perhaps more) in obedience to and respect for the judicial department of government... But we think the Dred Scott decision erroneous.

"We know the court that made it has often overruled its own decisions, and we shall do what we can to have it overrule this. We offer no resistance to it... If this important decision had been made by the unanimous concurrence of the judges, and without any apparent partisan bias, and in accordance with legal public expectation and with the steady practice of the departments throughout history, and had been in no part based upon assumed historical facts which are not really true; or if, wanting in some of these, it had been before the court more than once, and had there been affirmed and reaffirmed through a course of years, it then might be, perhaps would be, factious nay, even revolutionary, not to acquiesce in it as a precedent. But when, as is true, we find it wanting in all these claims to the public confidence, it is not resistance, it is not factious, it is not even disrespectful, to treat it as not having yet quite established a settled doctrine for the country." ¹

1 In Springfield speech of June 26, 1857.

The great struggle opened in Chicago on July 9, 1858, by a vigorous speech which Douglas delivered from the balcony of the Tremont House in reply to Lincoln, referring to his opponent as "a kind, amiable, and intelligent gentleman." On the following evening, he was answered by Lincoln in the same place. On July 16, Douglas again spoke at Bloomington and the next day at Springfield; and within a few hours on July 17th, Lincoln delivered at Springfield a powerful rejoinder to the Bloomington address.¹ Douglas devoted himself principally to Lincoln's previous speeches and the principles as set forth in his speech to the Republican Convention which had nominated him for United States Senator. However, the several discussions, which were separate and distinct, were unsatisfactory to Lincoln who preferred a conflict from close quarters. Lincoln's challenge for a series of joint debates from the same platform was subsequently accepted after much negotiation between the interested parties.² Douglas accepted and stipulated that there should be seven meetings at the places designated by him: Ottawa, August 21st; Freeport, August 27th; Jonesboro, September 15th; Charleston, September 18th; Galesburg, October 7th; Quincy, October 13th; and Alton, October 15th. Douglas demanded and was given the advantage of opening and closing the series and of having four openings to Lincoln's three. Lincoln promptly accepted the conditions.³ Meanwhile, both speakers were industriously canvassing the State, each independently of the other. Douglas himself spoke at all hours and places, regardless of weather conditions and his own personal fatigue.

Although many of the most ardent personal and political friends of Lincoln, at the outset of the struggle, were somewhat disheartened by the prestige of Douglas's brilliant career; although again some of them, in an anxious hour, had also concluded that a forensic contest with "The Little Giant" for the Senatorship was nothing less than utterly presumptuous and ridiculous; and although a few of them, in periods of mental depression and foreboding, had even become convinced that the encounter would ultimately end in a disastrous farce: Abraham Lincoln, nevertheless, throws down the gage of battle. Douglas reluctantly accepts. They now enter the arena of battle, two men radically different, not only in temperament and conduct, but also in principles and traits of character. Let us put the case between these two men, "not because Cicero was faultless, nor Atticus always to blame"; but because they, like ourselves, are both citizens of a great republic in the crisis of her existence. Let us hold up to our observation the equipment of these two gladiators: the former destined to display that conspicuous ability, that sterling integrity, and those traits of statesmanship, which mark him as the true representative of his people; the latter, agile, combative, audacious; popular, because of his advocacy of territorial acquisition, and powerful, because of his ability to meet any foe in the arena of debate.

1 The Chicago, Bloomington, and Springfield speeches reported in full in "Debates," pp. 5-64.

2 Correspondence in reference to debates contained in "Ireland" XVI, pp. 242-247; also, "Bartlett," pp. 74-79.

3 "Debates," pp. 64-66.

Rest assured that both of these men rose to positions of honor and distinction in the service of their country, not by dint of distinguished birth and fortune, but simply by their own virtues and abilities. Both are patriots of unwonted zeal; but while Douglas now suffers the disadvantages of misdirected energies, Lincoln now enjoys the benefit of righteous principles. In the former, we at first admire the striking individuality of the man; in the latter, the apparent uprightness of the cause. Then, too, if the personality of Douglas compel our instant respect, that of Lincoln does not inspire our immediate confidence.

The ambition to achieve distinction and renown upon the field of public discussion is not allotted in a less proportion to Lincoln than to his skilled forensic adversary. If, at the first encounter, there exists an unfavorable impression as to worthiness, it is because you readily perceive that the actuating motive in the case of Douglas savors more of self-interest when contrasted with the philanthropic spirit of Lincoln. Less powerful, dignified, and stately than Webster, less graceful, mellifluous, and eloquent than Clay, nature has, nevertheless, endowed Douglas with the gift of ready and effective oratory; practice has rendered him a debater of singular skill and ability. His is a bold spirit, rapid, fearless, and energetic. Lincoln is a lawyer, cautious, though not timid; courageous, though not imprudent. Patient toil has acquired for him an enviable height of professional prominence; serious thought and reflection, an accurate and comprehensive grasp of political problems and conditions. Of the Gracchi, those precious martyrs to popular rights, it is observable that Douglas more nearly resembles Caius in that rough and passionate temper which frequently carries him against his judgment and often spoils his speech; Lincoln more nearly resembles Tiberius in that steady submission of his temper to a mild and reasonable argument. In general deportment, therefore, Douglas is verbose and vehement; Lincoln reticent and composed.

The great characteristic of Douglas is the impassioned and enthusiastic turn of his mind; that of Lincoln, the even temper of his conduct and the deep conviction of his nature. Master of comprehensive information from active participation upon that great diversified field of American politics, thoroughly imbued with the traditional virtues and accomplishments of his party, gifted with a retentive memory, with a rich, vibrant voice, with a fine, impressive bearing, Douglas brings to bear upon his subject the assurance of a strong conviction the charm of varied expression, and the eloquence of impassioned feelings; Lincoln, probably possessed of inferior information upon historical precedents, of far less experience in constructive statesmanship, of none of the rhetoric, grace, and magnetism of a refined orator, masters, in a pronounced degree, that touching language of the human heart and proceeds with the consummate skill of a strategist. Thus, while Douglas, by his masterly oratory, leads men almost irresistibly to his own conclusions, Lincoln, though an orator of rare persuasiveness, seeks to control men through their reason and conscience. Douglas, capable of strong emotion, would arouse men to immediate action; Lincoln, opening the recesses of the human mind would quicken men to serious thought. Physical temperament exer-

cises a controlling influence in the argument of Douglas; sheer intellect, in that of Lincoln. If, therefore, the ideas of Douglas flow in quicker succession, those of Lincoln proceed with greater import. While the one, by the peculiar intensity of his argument, pours forth his words in one impetuous torrent, the other with the calmness and uniformity of a philosopher, speaks with decision, deliberation, and conclusion. The delivery of Douglas, you might happily conclude, rather resembles the brook in its daring, splendid, impetuous course down the mountain side; Lincoln's rather resembles it gliding through rich meadows and fertile lowlands in solemn and attractive majesty.

Both are statesmen, not only from original ambition, but also from natural constitution. As to their behavior in public discussion, it might be well to observe that, while the proud and haughty manner of Douglas and his offensive references to his plain and humble antagonist are regarded as an indication of the most intemperate vanity by the friends of the republic, the simplicity of Lincoln and his constant recourse to the confidence and judgment of the plain people are equally despised by the wise and sober representatives of American diplomacy. The overbearing haughtiness and the air of humiliating and contemptuous condescension, with which Douglas meets his opponent in discussion, are calculated to arouse hostility, but generally inspire disgust; while the serious, solemn, and lofty tone, with which Lincoln constantly endeavors to bring the moral and philosophic side of the question to the attention of his audience, is intended to satisfy the expectations of the reserved and the thoughtful and eventually molds the favorable opinion of all. Goaded to desperation by the peculiar disabilities of his position, unable to endure opposition with any degree of patience and tolerance, Douglas is even capable of insolence towards others; Lincoln, slow to condemn the errors of judgment in others, and holding himself, as he undoubtedly is, far superior to every petty prejudice and unworthy method, tempers his conduct by the constant perseverance of matured judgment. Naturally, Douglas from the very insecurity of his position, is content to satisfy the demands of the occasion; Lincoln, from the fidelity of his conviction, is resolved to dare the judgment of the future.

Both excel in logic. Perhaps, the logic of Douglas is the less lucid, original, and constructive; that of Lincoln, the more concise direct, and unswerving. In resource, in variety of knowledge, in richness of invention, in fertility of expression, in plausibility of paraphrase, in passionate invective and impromptu reply, Douglas is as much the superior of Lincoln as he is excelled by Lincoln in plain common sense, in certainty of information, in soundness of judgment. in pregnant definition and aptness of phrase, in generosity of admission and strict adherence to truth. Douglas is a man of genius and subtle reasoning; Lincoln of quaint wisdom and striking intuition. Douglas, excelling in the use of sophistry and fallacy, can cajole the passions and flatter the ambitions of the populace with remarkable success; Lincoln, disdaining artifice and evasion, can elucidate the clouded inconsistencies of speech with perspicuity and force and then

poise himself upon the judgment of enlightened sentiment. A wilful subterfuge or ingenious re-statement, asserted by Douglas with his characteristic boldness and skill, or perhaps delivered in his singularly forceful and impressive style, might easily confound an ordinary opponent and even mislead a listening multitude; but Lincoln by his superior power of analysis and admirable skill in dialectical thrust, stripping such argument of its philosophic veneer, can disclose its utter falsity of deduction and reveal its arrogant perversion of fact. Hence, the chief excellence in the argument of Douglas is its force of statement; that of Lincoln, in its wealth of substance.

Of perception, that quality which usually designates an acute and solid mind, Douglas is the more acute; Lincoln, the more profound. Douglas, ever self-possessed, cautious, and alert, is quick to reconcile the conflicting claims of the factions of his party; Lincoln, candid and ingenuous, knows how to assume a position which represents the abstract judgment of all. Douglas is cunning; Lincoln, discreet. Douglas, the idolized representative of his party, chooses for his tribunal, not the enlightened sentiment of humanity, but the perverted judgment of his constituents; Lincoln, accepting the eternal truths of the Constitution as the commands for universal justice, recognizes the human race as the judge of his fidelity.

The ultimate influence of the present conduct of Douglas would perpetuate the existence of a wicked institution, and thus hamper the happiness and prosperity of a people; that of Lincoln, would protect the liberty of the individual and develop the greatness of his country. Douglas is a man of expedients; Lincoln, a man of principles. The one values success; the other, justice. Controlled by a fear that another might usurp his place in Southern regard, Stephen A. Douglas, at the height of his extremity and at the behest of his constituents, subverts principle to self-interest; Abraham Lincoln with unchangeable faith in the goodness of his cause and the virtues of the people, considers his relation to the sum of universal good as revealed by the experience of history.

From a thoughtful consideration of the acts and motives of each the discriminating student will inevitably conclude that the one is acting a part; the other, fulfilling a destiny. The distinguished Douglas, after having spent a life of unusual activity, has left nothing that will endure; his greatest success, the repeal of the Missouri Compromise, has lost him the confidence of his party and the admiration of his country; Lincoln, with one mighty stroke, now begins a work which all time cannot overthrow and inscribes his name in the reverential affections of his country.

Interest in the struggle is deep and widespread. Each candidate, in order to keep the seven assignments and to satisfy, at the same time, many of the demands for additional speeches, is subject to constant exposure and fatigue. Both contestants speak almost every day during the intervals between the dates set for the joint debates—often several times on the same day. In a stretch of one hundred days, between the 9th of July and 2nd of November, Douglas delivers, according to his

own testimony one hundred and thirty speeches;¹ and Lincoln, we are informed, is in almost as great a demand. Inasmuch as railroad communication in Illinois in 1858 is as imperfect as it is incomplete, Lincoln is frequently obliged to resort to the use of horse, carriage, or steamer to reach his destination. In the case of Douglas, a luxuriously fitted special car, or a special train with complete accommodations for himself and friends, and, in fact, all the railroad facilities that money or influence can secure, does much to alleviate the attendant hardships of his particular lot. In the case of Lincoln whose legal services are conveniently forgotten by the Illinois Central Railroad, it is necessary to resort to every possible makeshift to keep his engagements. While some official of the Illinois Central is personally escorting Douglas over the State, either in his own private car or in a specially equipped train,² Lincoln, sometimes failing to secure accommodations on the regular trains in time to keep his appointments, is reduced to the necessity of going by freight. Frequently Douglas sweeps by Lincoln, side-tracked in an accommodation or a freight train to permit the passing of the special train, fully decorated with streamers, banners, and flags, and carrying a band which is playing "Hail to the Chief". On one occasion, Lincoln watches from a caboose on the end of a side-tracked freight the decorated special of his aristocratic rival thundering by. "Boys," laughs Lincoln, "the gentleman in that car evidently smelt no royalty in our carriage."³ Upon the approach of Douglas to the towns where the joint debates are to be held, the salutes of cannon and the blare of the brass band herald the tidings to the people. Processions with banners, triumphal arches, lavish decorations, boisterous serenades, flaming fire-works, and every conceivable type of noise-making device either real or manufactured—are brought into play to create sentiment favorable to the Democratic Senator. Every electioneering contrivance known to his managers are also employed to stimulate "the Little Giant" into strenuous exertion and to arouse among the electorate a contagious enthusiasm. He draws upon his resources,—physical, intellectual, and financial,⁴ — with the complete abandonment of a prodigal until the night before election. when at Chicago he makes, during a chilly November storm, his last valiant effort to deliver the closing speech of the campaign. Douglas has reached the limit of his strength and feels the clutch of complete exhaustion. Vigorous as he is, Douglas almost succumbs to the strain; and his last speech is delivered in a voice that is painful to hear. Unlike Douglas, Abraham Lincoln, after all the hardships to which he is subjected, probably far greater than those endured by Douglas, has passed through the strenuous political contest in prime physical condition with his faculties keen, alert, and apparently unimpaired by his exertions.

Nevertheless, the supporters of Lincoln are not lacking in enthusiasm nor in the use of the customary electioneering devices. De-

1 John Savage, p. 161; Nicolay and Hay, p. 146.

2 Although many of Lincoln's early biographers say that it was George B. McClellan, it has lately been discovered that the statement is erroneous.

3 "Lamon's Recollections," p. 22.

4 Douglas, according to Arnold, spent approximately \$50,000; Greeley, p. 33, says he spent \$80,000.

monstrations and special attentions are always distasteful to their leader. He thoroughly dislikes "frizzlegigs and fireworks", to use his own phrase. Lincoln protests all boisterous acclamations with manifest disgust. He dislikes the popular ovations of the prairie as much as his haughty competitor enjoys them. Douglas is not averse to the use of any device which might be instrumental in corraling votes; but Lincoln is satisfied to rest his case, as far as he is permitted, upon his appeals to the native intelligence of the people. So while Douglas, in regal pomp, might drive through the towns in the most elegant equipage that can be secured, Lincoln is content to be driven about the streets not infrequently in a farm-wagon. The supporters of Lincoln, becoming aware of their chieftain's democratic feelings, are soon taking an inordinate delight in showing their contempt for the elegant equipments of the Democratic nominee by carrying their candidate through the public thoroughfares on a high and unadorned hay-rack drawn by a team of heavy draught-horses. With undisguised delight, they carry into the different meetings their large banners upon which are epitomized the popular conception of the issues and reveal their preference for the Chief of the Sangamon. Some of them bear the inscriptions:

"Abe the Giant-Killer."

"Edgar County for the Tall Sucker."

"Illinois born under the Ordinance of '87."

"Westward the Star of empire takes its way;

The girls link on to Lincoln, their mothers were for Clay."

"Free Territories and Free Men,

Free Pulpits and Free Preachers,

Free Press and Free Pen,

Free Schools and Free Teachers."

The debate proceeds.

Broadly considered, Stephen A. Douglas contends that each State of the Union has the right to decide, in accordance with the doctrine of State Rights, just what rights, if any, should be accorded the Negro; that the people have the right, under the name of Popular Sovereignty, to decide whether or not they will have that which they already have, whether they like it or not; that slavery is the natural condition of things foreseen and recognized since the Declaration of Independence and the adoption of the Constitution; that this Union and this Government can exist forever half-free and half-slave; that those who differ with him are in favor of according the negro the rights, duties, and privileges of citizenship, are in favor of placing the negro and the savage, the inferior races of the earth, upon a social equality with the white man. On the other hand, Abraham Lincoln, accepting the Declaration of Independence as his compendium of political wisdom, declares that "all men are created equal, and endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights among which are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness"; that the Dred Scott decision and the Douglas idea of Popular Sovereignty cannot be reconciled in any one man's belief; that slavery is not the natural condition of things in the territories, nor affirmed by our forefathers in the Declaration of Independence; that slavery is wrong and certain legislation, at least

should be enacted, "restricting it from the territories where it had not gone, and legislating to cut off its source by the abrogation of the slave-trade, thus putting the seal of legislation against its spread." ¹

Thrice armed by the justice of his position, ² Lincoln carefully considers the demands of the occasion and allows no personal animosity or local ambitions to lead him from the chosen path of clear, philosophic reasoning. Since his customary humor is lacking, his anxious friends urge him to introduce the witty illustrations and amusing anecdotes which have made many of his addresses popular; but Lincoln refuses, declaring: "The occasion is too serious. The issues are too grave. I do not seek applause, or to amuse the people but to convince them." ³ He well knows, what Douglas himself in his overwhelming ambition to achieve immediate success is not always remembering, that the listening nation is following the successive stages of the great controversy. Even though anxious to secure the Senatorship, Lincoln yet feels that it is his peculiar duty to reveal the futility of the artful sophisms of his unscrupulous antagonist. The time was too serious for the resort to political shifts and delusions. How skillfully then does this champion of human rights, without distinction as to race or color, take up each particular point advanced by his popular antagonist and strips him of all excuse for having urged it! How clearly he reveals the inconsistency of his rival's position and illuminates the great principle that supports his own! How aptly he illustrates the moral laxity of Douglas, who, when in the stress of debate, employs sophistry, trickery, and even falsehood, to defend his position, or hopelessly befog the real issue of the contest! "Judge Douglas," says Lincoln, "is playing cuttlefish, a small species of fish that has no mode of defending itself, when pursued, except by throwing out a black fluid which makes the water so dark the enemy cannot follow, and thus it escapes." In answer to his opponent's artful implication that the original signers of the Constitution must have violated the law of God, or they certainly would have elevated the negro to a condition of political equality with the white man, conferring all political rights and privileges, Lincoln points quietly to the incontrovertible fact that, if political rights and privileges are dependent upon color and are intended only for men of European birth and descent, such a rule, if consistently maintained, would exclude the Russians of Asia, a vast and progressive population, from all the benefits of the Declaration of Independence. With what superb logic, he disposes of his rival's great principle of Popular Sovereignty! "It means", says he, "that if one man wishes to enslave another, no third man has the right to object". How grandly he attacks his opponent's allegations that the negro has no rights under the Constitution, and also, those fruitless efforts of certain men to repress all tendency toward liberty and ultimate emancipation! "They must", he declares "if they would do this, go back to the era of our independence and muzzle the cannon which thunders its annual joyous return; they must penetrate the human soul, and eradicate therefrom the love of

1 In speech in the joint Lincoln-Douglas debate at Ottawa, Ill., on August 21, 1858.

2 In Shakespeare's King Henry VI, Part II, Act. 3, Sc. : "Thrice is he armed that hath his quarrel just."

3 Isaac N. Arnold's "Life of Lincoln," p. 145.

liberty." Hear him assailing the taunting charge of Douglas that the advocates of colored rights and privileges are striving to introduce social equality between the two races:

"Anything that argues me into the idea of perfect social and political equality with the Negro is but a specious and fantastic arrangement of words, by which a man can prove a horse-chestnut and chestnut horse. I have no purpose to introduce political and social equality between the black and white races. There is a physical difference between the two, which, in my judgment, will probably forever forbid their living together upon the footing of perfect equality; and inasmuch as it becomes a necessity that there must be a difference I, as well as Judge Douglas, am in favor of the race to which I belong having the superior position. I have never said anything to the contrary, but I hold that, notwithstanding all this, there is no reason in the world why the Negro is not entitled to all the natural rights enumerated in the Declaration of Independence—the right of life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness. I hold that he is as much entitled to these as the white man. I agree with Judge Douglas that he is not my equal in many respects—certainly not in color, perhaps not in moral and intellectual endowments. But in the right to eat the bread which his own hand earns, without the leave of anybody else, he is my equal, and the equal of Judge Douglas, and the equal of every living man.¹

It is observable that Lincoln, by the exhibition of rare patience and skill, is successfully parrying his opponent's most dangerous blows. The critical students of political history, too, now begin to realize that, in profundity of knowledge, unanswerable logic, and inimitable style, no greater speeches have ever been delivered on public questions in the history of their country. But a still greater revelation of his judgment as a political strategist yet awaits them. After answering Douglas's seven interrogatories on the slavery problem which were calculated to reveal inconsistencies, Lincoln thereupon propounds four questions of his own, one question of which alarms the Republican leaders.² They strongly protest the wisdom of such a question at the Freeport meeting of August 27th; but Lincoln persists in his purpose, even though he might lose a number of doubtful votes and jeopardize his campaign for the Senatorship. This new champion of slavery restriction employing the Socratic mode of argument, so unwisely adopted in an evil hour by his self-confident antagonist, now advances upon the redoubtable Douglas with renewed vigor and confidence. He hurls at Douglas that question which reaches the very marrow of the controversy and brings him into irreconcilable conflict between his theory that the people of a Territory have the right to exclude slavery, or not, as they wish, and his defense of the Dred Scott decision, according to which they have no such right. You will recall the mooted question:

"Can the people of a United States Territory, in any lawful way, against any citizen of the United States, exclude Slavery from its limits, prior to the formation of a State Constitution?"

The brilliant Douglas, like Proteus of old, has sought, by every

1 In the joint Lincoln-Douglas debate at Ottawa, Ill., on August 21, 1858.

2 Propounded by Lincoln in the second of the joint debates at Freeport, Ill., on August 27, 1858.

wile and stratagem known to his prolific brain, to avoid the truth. He becomes suddenly aware of his ugly dilemma, and, with rare artfulness seeks a middle ground, declaring that the Dred Scott decision is an abstract proposition depending for its force and virtue upon local legislation. Such a wilful misconstruction of the Supreme Court decision which he so valiantly defended by voice and pen but a short time before, such an invidious effort to supplant the judicial authority of the Supreme Court under the argument that the Territories are still free agents and can exclude slavery despite such a decision, now involves Douglas in a gross legal blunder. In marked contrast to his former legal astuteness, Douglas now advances the theory that the Territories can now proceed to the adoption of certain political regulations, so hostile to slavery, that no slave owner can enjoy his property in peaceful security within their boundaries. He assumes the illogical position that the constitutional right of peaceful enjoyment of property, whether slave or otherwise, now established or guaranteed by the Dred Scott decision, can now be cancelled by police or any other hostile legislation. He has the audacity to appeal to the popular fancy by the advocacy of a local ordinance or law, which, by the necessity of events, cannot be other than contrary to the Constitution and absolutely null and void. Moreover, in the face of the principle enunciated by the Dred Scott decision, it becomes soon evident that Douglas's simple affirmation of the right of a Territory to exclude slavery from its limits, a declaration that is regarded by the South as nothing less than an apostasy, becomes the great rock against which the Presidential aspirations of Stephen Arnold Douglas are rudely blasted.

The debate is ended.

For this particular period of our development an immense vote is cast. The returns show that 126,940 votes are cast for the Lincoln candidates; 121,940 votes, for the Douglas candidates; and 5,091 votes for the Lecompton candidates, another class of Democrats.¹ It is apparent that Lincoln's party has made heavy gains over its vote of 1856, when James Buchanan of Pennsylvania carried Illinois for President, and has succeeded in electing its State ticket. The moral victory is Lincoln's but the great plainsman, calm and serene, has met defeat. Moreover, he alone, of all those so deeply interested in the result of the issue, can now perceive the irreparable damage wrought by Douglas's fatal blunder. Washburn, Cook, Hatch, Judd, Medill, Grimshaw, and many of Lincoln's ardent advisers and supporters, thinking only of the temporary advantage, are discouraged, disheartened, and dejected. As was predicted by Lincoln's shrewdest supporters, the clever manner in which Douglas extricates himself from his perilous position catches the fancy of his Illinois constituency, steadies the wavering districts, and practically assures him the Senatorship. A single letter, written by Senator Crittenden of Kentucky at one of the most crucial points of the struggle, contributes also its strengthening

¹ Horace White, on February 27, 1890, says: For Treasurer, Miller, Republican received 125,430; Fondly, Douglas Democrat, 121,609; and Dougherty, Buchanan Democrat, 5,079.—Quoted by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, Chap. IV, p. 125. Edition of 1892.

influence in the wavering districts.¹ By a judicious apportionment of the legislative districts, and the additional fact that eight of the thirteen State Senators who are not involved in the election, are supporters of Douglas, the Democrats are given a twofold advantage; for they are enabled to offset the prevailing Republican sentiment and to secure the small majority of eight votes on the joint ballot of the Legislature in January, 1859. Douglas is elected.²

It is a singular fact that Lincoln accepts the defeat with surprising equanimity; for he is not unprepared for such a result. However, he is sorely disappointed that his courageous efforts have not been crowned with success. Lamon declares that Lincoln quaintly remarks that he felt "like the boy that stumped his toe—it hurt too bad to laugh and he was too big to cry."³ In spite of the necessity for greater attention to his professional duties, Lincoln is nevertheless unable to resist any opportunity to attack the doctrines of his wily antagonist. And singular as it might seem to us today, Lincoln discovers that it is even necessary to combat the growing influence of Douglas in the ranks of the Republican themselves. Some of the Republicans of Illinois, disregarding the fact that the foremost campaigner of the Democracy has met his master, are still hopeful that the political differences will be submerged and their organization will eventually march to power under the banner of the victorious Senator.⁴ Even some of Lincoln's warmest supporters entertain for a time that preposterous idea, with the result that Lincoln is compelled to counteract its malignant influence. Speaking at Chicago in the spring of 1859, Lincoln declares: "Let the Republican Party of Illinois dally with Judge Douglas. Let them fall in behind him and make him their candidate, and they do not absorb him—he absorbs them. They would come out at the end all Douglas men, all claimed by him as having endorsed every one of his doctrines upon the great subject with which the whole nation is engaged at this hour."⁵ Even as late as mid-summer, disturbed by the persistently favorable attitude of certain Republicans toward the crafty Douglas, Lincoln writes Galloway con-

1 Whitney, pp. 383-386; Bartlett, pp. 83-84; and pp. 99-100; Nicolay and Hay, II p. 142.

2 Horace White says that Arnold's statement that Lincoln lost the election because a number of holding-over Senators, in districts which actually gave Republican majorities, were Democrats, is an error. White says that the legislature consisted of 25 Senators and 75 Representatives. Thirteen Senators held over from the preceding election. Of these, 8 were Democrats and 5 Republicans, of the 12 Senators elected this year, 6 were Democrats, and 6 Republicans. So the new Senate was composed of 14 Democrats and 11 Republicans.

Of the 75 members of the House of Representatives, the Democrats elected 40 and the Republicans 35.

Therefore on the joint ballot, the Democrats had 54 and the Republicans 46. By this vote, Douglas was re-elected by a majority of 8.

White maintains that there was no jerrymandering, and that by all the rules of the game, Douglas fairly won.

— Horace White, February 27, 1890, quoted by Herndon and Weik, Vol. II, Chap. 4, pp. 125-126. Edition of 1930.
p. 127.

3 Ward Lamon, p. 419; Brooks, p. 181; Browne, p. 307; Herndon, II, p. 127.
p. 127.

4 Alonzo Rothschild, "Lincoln, Master of Men," p. 114.

5 "Works," I, p. 529.

cerning his friends who are leaning toward "popular sovereignty" and also toward Douglas "the most dangerous enemy of Liberty because the most insidious one." ¹ It is not revealed to Douglas's supporters and advisers in Illinois that "the Freeport doctrine", or the theory of "unfriendly legislation" would be accepted by the South as a base betrayal of their interests and as a repudiation of the Dred Scott decision. They can not appreciate the grave political peril in which Douglas now finds himself encompassed. The disquietude manifested by the Senator betrays his great personal concern. In vain does Douglas hurry southward, upon the conclusion of the debates, to make speeches commendatory of slavery. Fruitless and unavailing, indeed, are all arguments advanced to reconcile his erstwhile Southern associates. "His explanations explanatory of explanations explained", as Lincoln felicitously describes them, are productive of no good results. Douglas has crossed the Rubicon and brought war upon his Northern Democracy. The realization of the full force of Douglas's straddling answer is reserved until 1860, when the Democratic Convention meets at Charleston, South Carolina, for the nomination of a candidate for the Presidency. The Southern press roundly denounces Douglas for his "Freeport heresy". But Buchanan adherents, accepting his doctrine as nothing more or less than apostasy, are glad enough to assail him with extreme bitterness. The slaveholders, sorely disappointed by the doctrine enunciated by their former pliant tool, now determine to sacrifice him upon the altar of their selfish interests. Cost what it might, they cannot tolerate any further their once serviceable champion. Douglas is marked for political execution.

To Abraham Lincoln, his accomplishments in the Senatorial campaign, though unfruitful of immediate success, open the portals to a great national honor and achievement. After all, adversity is often the refining school of a great success. Lincoln's poet expresses it:

"Sweet are the uses of adversity,
Which like a toad, ugly and venomous,
Wears yet a precious jewel in his head;
And this our life, exempt from public haunt,
Finds tongues in trees, books in running brooks,
Sermons in stones, and good in everything." ²

The antecedent life, crowded with disappointments, begets a hardihood singularly proportionate to the length and severity of the discipline. Failure is often the necessary forerunner of a great success. This antecedent life, while not barren of successes, is prolific of failures. Lincoln, too, seems to have passed through some of the disheartening experiences of worthy genius, who, like the brilliant author of *Hudibras*, "ask for bread and receive a stone, or ask for fish and receive a serpent." Lincoln enters the Black Hawk War as a captain, but finally returns as a private. He becomes engaged in business: but the store soon "winked itself out." He is appointed a deputy surveyor; but his compass and chain are sold for debt. He announces himself as a candidate for the General Assembly; but his first attempt results in failure. He becomes the recognized leader of the Illinois

¹ "Works," I, p. 537.

² Shakespeare, "As You Like It," Act 2, Scene 1.

Assembly in 1838 and the Whig candidate for the Speakership; but the Democratic majority bestows the honor upon General Ewing. He becomes a candidate for Congress in 1843; but the Sangamon County Whigs select the brilliant Edward D. Baker. He becomes an applicant for Commissioner of the General Land Office of Illinois in 1849; but the appointment is given to Justin Butterfield of Chicago. He is offered the governorship of Oregon; but his wife vetoes the change of residence. He becomes a candidate for the United States Senate in 1854; but the Legislature elects Lyman Trumbull. He is presented as a desirable candidate for the Vice Presidency on the Fremont ticket of 1856; but the party managers select Dayton of New Jersey. And now Lincoln is again a candidate for the United States Senate; but a majority of the Legislature makes the success of Douglas possible.

Failure? Hardly. They are the thirty years of endeavor by which success must beat down defeat. They are the important factors in a life of unusual activity that contribute their educational and directive influence to an ultimate achievement. They are the tedious days of trial, suffering, and discipline by which a sturdy manhood is fortified for his chosen work. In fact, they constitute the essential elements of that rugged period of study, labor, ambition, organization, responsibility, strain of the intellect, and anguish of the soul, by which a strong nature, fully acquainted with the reverses and disappointments of life, is fortified and disciplined for the great tasks and responsibilities of the future.

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